

REMARKS

Claims 1-34 are pending in this application. Selected claims are amended to clarify the invention. Claims 33 and 34 are added by this amendment and do not include new matter. Support for new claims 33 and 34 is provided in the originally filed specification at least in paragraphs [0032] and [0033].

Applicants thank the Examiner for considering the references submitted in the Information Disclosure Statement filed on June 16, 2004, as evidenced by the signed and initialed forms PTO-A820.

Reconsideration and allowance of all the rejected claims are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Claim Rejection under 35 USC §112

Claim 25 is rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Applicants have amended claim 25 to depend from claim 10, thereby overcoming this rejection. The Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw this rejection.

Claim Rejections under 35 USC §102

Claims 1-14, 17, 18 and 20 are rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Helmstetter et al. (U.S. Pub. Appln. 2004/0041373). Applicants respectfully overcome this rejection.

Independent claims 1 and 10 recite, among other things, that the retention members are formed integral with and from the same material as the base and wherein the internal edge of the base is continuous with an edge of the material forming the retention members. According to one embodiment of the invention, material usage is reduced by using portions

of metal that normally would be removed to form the inflator opening (see the specification at page 9, paragraph 0032).

The Examiner alleges that Helmstetter et al disclose "at least two retention members 20 extending from said base 25, said retention members 20 formed integral with and from the same material as said base 25" (see paragraph number 2 on pages 2 and 3 of the July 24, 2006 Office Action). Helmstetter et al. disclose that the sleeve-like extensions 20 are formed *separately* from the generator holder 12 and may penetrate through openings of the sleeve-like extensions 20. Furthermore, the cross-hatching in FIG. 8 suggest that the sleeve-like extensions 20 and the generator holder 12 are formed from a different material. As a result, Helmstetter et al. are at least deficient because it fails to teach or suggest the retention members are formed integral with and from the same material as the base.

Additionally, Helmstetter et al. are deficient at least because they fail to teach or suggest that the internal edge of the base is continuous with an edge of the material forming the retention members.

Since Helmstetter et al. neither disclose nor suggest the invention claimed in independent claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-9 or the invention claimed in independent claim 10 and its dependent claims 11-14, 17, 18 and 20, these claims clearly are not anticipated by, or obvious over, the disclosure of Helmstetter et al. For the foregoing reason, reconsideration and allowance of these claims are requested.

Claims 1, 2, 8, 9 and 28-32 are rejected to under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Berrahou et al. (U.S. Pub. Appln. 2004/0239080). Applicants respectfully overcome this rejection.

Independent claim 1 recites, among other things, that the base includes an inflator opening that is positioned in an internal portion of the base and define an internal edge of the base and wherein the internal edge of the base is continuous with an edge of the material forming the retention members. Independent claim 28 recites, among other things, defining an inflator opening in the base, the opening being positioned in an internal portion of the base and retention members that extend into the inflator opening. According to one embodiment of the invention, material usage is reduced by using portions of metal that normally would be removed to form the inflator opening (see the specification at page 9, paragraph 0032).

Berrahou et al. disclose an inflatable restraint system that includes a housing having a base plate with a central aperture and a periphery, wherein the base plate includes a plurality of integral hooked tabs extending from the base plate (see Berrahou et al., the Abstract). Berrahou et al. require the cutting out and raising of the metal segments originally located on the bracket main part (main planar portion 11). More particularly, Berrahou et al. disclose that the plurality of integral hooked tabs 20 are positioned intermediate of periphery 16 and central aperture 12, wherein "intermediate of" should be understood to encompass designs wherein the hooked tabs are formed independently of the outside or outboard edges of the base plate (see Berrahou et al., page 1, paragraph 0014). Berrahou et al. further defines "intermediate of" as stamping and/or cutting of the hooked tabs being not coextensive with portions of the periphery, but rather the cuts are formed inboard thereof (see Berrahou et al., page 1, paragraph 0014). Berrahou et al. discloses an alternative embodiment in which the hooked tabs have common edges with the *base plate periphery* (see Berrahou et al., pages 1 and 2, paragraph 0014).

Berrahou et al. explicitly teaches away from forming the hooked tabs in the central aperture 12. Thus, Berrahou et al. fail at least to teach or suggest that the base includes an inflator opening that is positioned in an internal portion of the base and defines an internal edge of the base and wherein the internal edge of the base is continuous with an edge of the material forming the retention members.

In addition, the size of the retention members would be restricted under Berrahou et al.'s structure, in order to retain the strength of the bracket. On the other hand, there is no such concern in the present invention.

Since Berrahou et al. neither disclose nor suggest the invention claimed in independent claim 1 and its dependent claims 2, 8 and 9 or the invention claimed in independent claim 28 and its dependent claims 29-32, these claims clearly are not anticipated by, or obvious over, the disclosure of Berrahou et al. For the foregoing reason, reconsideration and allowance of these claims are requested.

Claim Rejections under 35 USC §103(a)

Claims 1, 2, 8-16, 19, 21-24, 26 and 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Hodac et al. (U.S. Pat. 5,775,725) in view of Berrahou et al. (U.S. Pub. Appln. 2004/0239080). Claims 10¹ and 21-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Hodac et al. in view of Berrahou et al., and further in view of Mirone (U.S. Pat. 6,457,379). Applicants respectfully overcome these rejection.

Independent claims 1 and 10 recite, among other things, that the retention members are formed integral with and from the same material as the base and wherein the internal edge

¹ Claim 10 appears to be erroneously included in this rejection because this claim does not recite a horn bracket.
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of the base is continuous with an edge of the material forming the retention members.

According to one embodiment of the invention, material usage is reduced by using portions of metal that normally would be removed to form the inflator opening (see the specification at page 9, paragraph 0032).

The Examiner acknowledges that Hodac et al. are deficient because they fails to disclose "the retention members being stamped integral with the base" (see paragraph number 6 on page 5 of the July 24, 2006 Office Action) and relies on Berrahou et al. for disclosing this feature. While Berrahou et al. discloses that the retention members are integral with the base, Berrahou et al. is deficient at least because it fails to teach or suggest that the internal edge of the base is continuous with an edge of the material forming the retention members. Thus, Hodac et al. and Berrahou et al. are deficient, both alone and in combination.

Regarding Mirone, the Examiner relies on this reference for disclosing "a steering wheel comprising a support structure 1, a bracket 20, and a horn bracket 7 disposed between the support structure and the bracket, the horn bracket including three pin receivers 22 (see paragraph number 7 on page 6 of the July 24, 2006 Office Action). Even if Mirone discloses this feature, Hodac et al., Berrahou et al. and Mirone are deficient, both alone and in combination, at least because they fail to teach or suggest that the internal edge of the base is continuous with an edge of the material forming the retention members.

For at least this reason, Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness based on Hodac et al. in view of Berrahou et al. and/or based on Hodac et al. in view of Berrahou et al. and further in view of Mirone. Thus,

claims 1 and 10 are allowable. Furthermore, claims 2, 8, 9, 11-16, 19, and 21-27 are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency from corresponding ones of claims 1 and 10.

New claim 33 recites, among other things, at least two retention members extending from said base and having a curved shaped, including a curved interface at a portion of the at least two retention members that contact the base. New claim 34 recites, among other things, curling the retention members to include a curved interface at a portion of the retention members that contact the base. At least these features are not taught or suggested by the cited references.

If the Examiner believes that there is any issue which could be resolved by a telephone or personal interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact one of the undersigned attorneys at the telephone number listed below.

Applicants hereby petition for any extension of time which may be required to maintain the pendency of this case, and any required fee for such an extension is to be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0951.

Respectfully submitted,

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